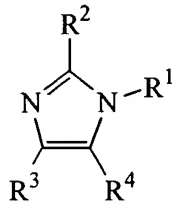
LISTING OF CLAIMS

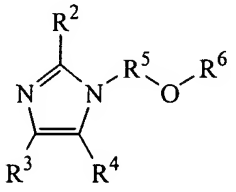
1. (Original) A resist composition comprising at least one basic compound having an imidazole skeleton and a polar functional group, represented by the general formula (1):



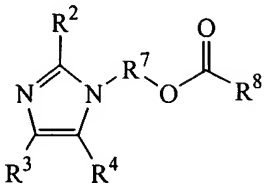
(1)

wherein R^1 is a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 2 to 20 carbon atoms bearing at least one polar functional group selected from among hydroxyl, carbonyl, ester, ether, sulfide, carbonate, cyano and acetal groups; R^2, R^3 and R^4 are each independently a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl group of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of 7 to 10 carbon atoms.

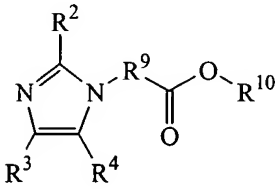
2. (Original) A resist composition comprising at least one basic compound represented by the general formulae (2) to (6):



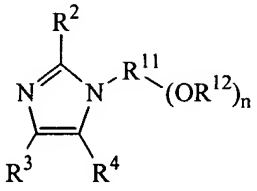
(2)



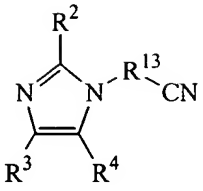
(3)



(4)



(5)



(6)

wherein R^2, R^3 and R^4 are each independently a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl group of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of 7 to 10 carbon atoms;

R^5, R^7, R^9 and R^{13} are each independently a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms;

R^6 and R^8 are each independently a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms which may contain at least one group selected from among hydroxyl, carbonyl, ester, ether, sulfide, carbonate, cyano and acetal groups;

R^{10} is an alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms which may contain at least one group selected from among hydroxyl, carbonyl, ester, ether, sulfide, carbonate, cyano and acetal groups;

R^{11} is a (n+1)-valent, straight, branched or cyclic hydrocarbon group of 2 to 10 carbon atoms;

R^{12} is each independently a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms which may contain at least one group selected from among hydroxyl, carbonyl, ester, ether, sulfide, carbonate, cyano and acetal groups, or two of R^{12} may bond together to form a ring; and

n is equal to 2, 3, 4 or 5.

3. (Original) A positive-working resist composition comprising:

(A) the basic compound of claim 1;

(B) an organic solvent;

(C) a base resin having an acid labile group-protected acidic functional group which is alkali-insoluble or substantially alkali-insoluble, but becomes alkali-soluble when the acid labile group is eliminated; and

(D) a photoacid generator.

4. (Original) The positive resist composition of claim 3 which further comprises (E) a dissolution inhibitor.

5. (Original) A negative-working resist composition comprising:

(A) the basic compound of claim 1;

(B) an organic solvent;

(C') a base resin which is alkali-soluble, but becomes substantially alkali-insoluble when crosslinked with a crosslinking agent;

(D) a photoacid generator; and

(F) a crosslinking agent which induces crosslinkage under the action of an acid.

6. (Original) A patterning process comprising the steps of:

(1) applying the positive resist composition of claim 3 onto a substrate;

(2) heat treating the applied resist, then exposing the heat-treated resist through a photomask to high-energy radiation having a wavelength of at most 300 nm or an electron beam; and

(3) heat treating the exposed resist, then developing the resist with a liquid developer.

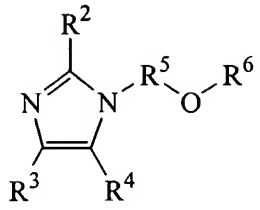
7. (Original) A patterning process comprising the steps of:

(1) applying the negative resist composition of claim 5 onto a substrate;

(2) heat treating the applied resist, then exposing the heat-treated resist through a photomask to high-energy radiation having a wavelength of at most 300 nm or an electron beam; and

(3) heat treating the exposed resist, then developing the resist with a liquid developer.

8. (Original) A basic compound represented by the general formula (2):



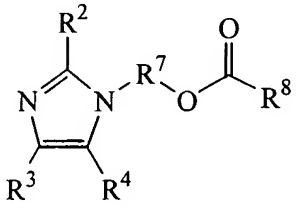
(2)

wherein R^2, R^3 and R^4 are each independently a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl group of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of 7 to 10 carbon atoms;

R^5 is a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms; and

R^6 is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms which may contain at least one group selected from among hydroxyl, carbonyl, ester, ether, sulfide, carbonate, cyano and acetal groups.

9. (Original) A basic compound represented by the general formula (3):



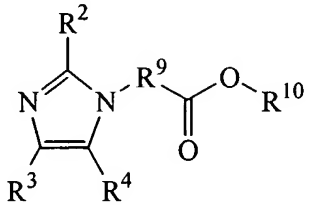
(3)

wherein R^2, R^3 and R^4 are each independently a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl group of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of 7 to 10 carbon atoms;

R^7 is a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms; and

R^8 is a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms which may contain at least one group selected from among hydroxyl, carbonyl, ester, ether, sulfide, carbonate, cyano and acetal groups.

10. (Original) A basic compound represented by the general formula (4):



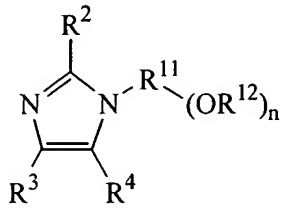
(4)

wherein R^2, R^3 and R^4 are each independently a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl group of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of 7 to 10 carbon atoms;

R^9 is a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms; and

R^{10} is an alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms which may contain at least one group selected from among hydroxyl, carbonyl, ester, ether, sulfide, carbonate, cyano and acetal groups.

11. (Original) A basic compound represented by the general formula (5):



(5)

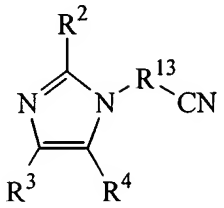
wherein R^2, R^3 and R^4 are each independently a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl group of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of 7 to 10 carbon atoms;

R^{11} is a (n+1)-valent, straight, branched or cyclic hydrocarbon group of 2 to 10 carbon atoms;

R^{12} is each independently a hydrogen atom or an alkyl group of 1 to 15 carbon atoms which may contain at least one group selected from among hydroxyl, carbonyl, ester, ether, sulfide, carbonate, cyano and acetal groups, or two of R^{12} may bond together to form a ring; and

n is equal to 2, 3, 4 or 5.

12. (Original) A basic compound represented by the general formula (6):

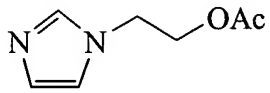


(6)

wherein R^2, R^3 and R^4 are each independently a hydrogen atom, a straight, branched or cyclic alkyl group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms, an aryl group of 6 to 10 carbon atoms, or an aralkyl group of 7 to 10 carbon atoms; and

R^{13} is a straight, branched or cyclic alkylene group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms.

13. (New) A compound of the formula:



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14. (New) A resist composition comprising the compound of claim 13.